








	<p>Illinois Small Business Development Center Network</p> <p><b>WEEKLY CONNECTION</b></p> <p>Entrepreneurship ~ Innovation ~ Technology</p>	
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*"Professional Guidance for Business Growth"*

**April 6, 2015**

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### **Spotlight on Success – Cool Spoons**

Cool Spoons Frozen Yogurt, a client of the **Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Southern Illinois at Carbondale** is opening a second location in Marion. Don Johnson and his wife, Jill, have been **SIU SBDC** clients since opening their first store in 2012.

"From day one, we always thought we would go into other markets," Mr. Johnson said. "It was just a matter of time and resources to make that happen. We have a big customer base that comes over from Williamson County," he said. "With us opening another store, those folks who may come over to Carbondale only on the weekends, now have us though the week." Mr. Johnson credits his wife with a big share of the business's success, saying it is a collaborative effort between them.

Cool Spoons in Carbondale will undergo some light remodeling while remaining open and both stores will feature new items.

"It was very important to me to stay as close as we could to Illinois 13 and have good visibility from there," he said.

The company is still looking for a few more part-time employees, Johnson said. They have hired five people, but are looking to hire six to eight staff members all together. The **Illinois Small Business Development Center at SIU** assisted the couple with the opening of their first location with business planning and financial assistance. In addition the Center continues to assist with marketing and management advice.

### **SBDC's In The News - Castle Bank Continues Support of SBDC**

Castle Bank Continues Support of Illinois SBDC at Waubensee - Entrepreneurs and owners of small businesses in the region again will receive some extra benefits from the Illinois

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Waubonsee Community College, thanks to continued support from Castle Bank.

The Illinois SBDC at Waubonsee has announced that Castle Bank, an Illinois-based division of First National Bank of Omaha, has, for a second year, committed additional funds to help the Illinois SBDC at Waubonsee sustain its mission of providing services to help entrepreneurs and small business owners continue to drive the local economy forward.

"The additional funding from Castle Bank will allow us to increase the variety and depth of services that we can offer our clients," said Harriet Parker, manager at the Illinois SBDC at Waubonsee. "In particular, we will be offering a number of financial literacy services to help businesses improve profitability."

Castle Bank provided the Illinois SBDC at Waubonsee with \$15,000 in 2014 through funds set aside through the Community Reinvestment Act, which encourages banks to invest a portion of their capital back into the communities they serve. Castle Bank chooses to use some of that money to help fund operations at various Illinois SBDCs operating in the communities it serves in Kane, Kendall, DeKalb, McHenry, Boone and Winnebago counties in Illinois, said Michael Algrim, director of business banking for Castle Bank.

In addition to the Illinois SBDC at Waubonsee, Castle Bank has also committed funds to support Illinois SBDC operations at Elgin Community College, Kishwaukee Community College and McHenry County College, as well as the Fox Valley Entrepreneurship Center.

"The Fox Valley has a lot to offer small businesses, and with the help of supporting organizations like the SBDC, we're reviving the entrepreneurial spirit that was once such a large part of the area's history," said Algrim. "There's an entrepreneurial movement gaining momentum in the Fox Valley and we're excited to be able to support the organizations that are at the front lines of this initiative."

Algrim said future funding for the Illinois SBDC at Waubonsee and other regional institutions will be reviewed annually, but the intent is to maintain some level of financial support now and in the future.

The Illinois SBDC at Waubonsee is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

### **Maximizing Neoserra – America's SBDC National Impact Survey**

The America's SBDC National Impact Survey is being sent out today, April 6<sup>th</sup>, to Illinois SBDC long term clients. Please continue to strongly urge your clients to complete this very important survey.

#### **Client email Addresses**

If a client does not have an email address please enter a generic address from your SBDC in the Neoserra client profile. For example, the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Bradley could use [illinoisbdc@bradley.edu](mailto:illinoisbdc@bradley.edu) in the client email field.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Tom Becker will be on vacation from April 6 – 10. Please contact Marie Dumas with Neoserra questions at 312/814-3557 or [marie.dumas@illinois.gov](mailto:marie.dumas@illinois.gov)**

### **Valued Resources – "Taking Your Business Global"**

## SBA ANNOUNCES "TAKING YOUR BUSINESS GLOBAL" - Webinar to Help Small Businesses Build an International Customer Base.

On Thursday, April 30th, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. the Illinois District Office of the US. Small Business Administration is hosting a webinar to introduce small businesses to international markets. By learning how to use our network of government resources to assist in exporting goods and services, your business can become a major player in the international marketplace.

The webinar will present information for your firms' export readiness by providing an in-depth evaluation for market readiness in the global marketplace. It will also cover how small business owners should prepare for entrance to foreign markets, and what loan programs the SBA has to offer to support participation in foreign markets.

This webinar is free of charge. Participants may register by contacting Stephen Konkle at 312-886-4208, or [Stephen.konkle@sba.gov](mailto:Stephen.konkle@sba.gov). The deadline for registration is Monday, April 27, 2015..

### **IESBGA News**

Arrangements are being finalized for a GrowthWheel Advisor Certification Training Program to be held prior to the upcoming IESBGA Conference on Monday afternoon, May 18<sup>th</sup>, all day Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> and in the morning on Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in participating in the GrowthWheel training program please email Rod Hollenstine at [Rodney.Hollenstine@illinois.gov](mailto:Rodney.Hollenstine@illinois.gov) by Friday April 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Network News and Moves - America's #1 Trusted Network Celebrates 35 Years**

America's Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) kicked off their 35th Anniversary Monday, March 16th, with a reception and SBDC client showcase on Capitol Hill. Congressional leaders addressed the reception guests and America's SBDC Network showcased 11 SBDC clients from eight SBDC state programs. Please [CLICK HERE to read more](#).

### **America's SBDC Network Connect**

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to access the latest issue of [America's SBDC Network Connect Newsletter](#). In this issue you will find a link to the New America's SBDC Annual Conference page which includes information about sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities for the 2015 America's SBDC Annual Conference – Gateway to Small Business Success, to be held in San Francisco.

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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and DCEO Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the DCEO Illinois SBDC Network to provide the service delivery partners with regular updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. You may send any information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to [Tom.Becker@illinois.gov](mailto:Tom.Becker@illinois.gov). Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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